

## Audit of Willd Body Program implicates former director

Fred Charatan, Florida

The University of California at Irvine (UCI), in a 29-page audit of its Willd Body Program that took more than a year and a half to complete, has faulted its former director, Christopher S Brown.

The audit uncovered lack of supervision, poor record keeping, failure to return remains to families in accordance with their wishes, and financial irregularities. The last included supplying 7 cadaver spines

to a research group in Phoenix, Arizona, for \$5,125. The payment was made to a company, University Health Services, not affiliated with UCI and owned by Jeffrey Frazier, a business associate of Brown's.

The audit also found overcharges of several hundred dollars by Harry's Transportation, a company owned by Brown and Frazier for carrying cadavers.

Donated cadavers were used, without UCI's permission, in a private anatomy class run in UCI's Willd Body morgue by Frazier's company Replica, which charged \$175 per student.

Brown charged families who desired a return of their cremated donors' ashes a \$600 fee. Three families paid to have ashes returned, but there is no record that UCI received the money.

Poor record keeping prevented the UCI auditors from accounting for 320 of the 441 cadavers donated to the Willd Body Program from January 1, 1995, through August 11, 1999. As the result of alleged misplaced bodies, about 20 lawsuits have been filed by survivors against UCI, Brown, and Frazier.

UCI fired Brown in September 1999. No charges have been brought against him, but the Orange County District Attorney's office is investigating the allegations.

Corrective measures taken by UCI include replacing Brown, a former funeral director, with a more experienced mortician as program director and written policies and procedures. Thomas C Cesario, UCI College of Medicine Dean, has appointed Peter Lawrence, a professor of surgery, to oversee the program, in conjunction with an advisory committee of faculty members.

Willd Body programs based at US medical schools collect about 15,000 bodies annually. The demand far outstrips the supply, according to Philip Guyett, former manager of the Willd Body Program at Western University of Health Sciences in Pomona, California.

After the audit began last year, Cesario said,

The people who will their body to medical science and education have made one of the most noble gifts possible, and it is absolutely essential that our Willd Body Program operate not only in accordance with the highest professional standards, but also with the highest standards of respect for these donors and their families.



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Scandals surrounding UCI's Willd Body Program are reminiscent of 18th century body snatching. (Engraving by Phiz from *Benson's remarkable trials*, 1777.)